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ABSTRACT

Avoidance strategies involve the tactics and techniques people use when they don't wish to be influenced by others. To investigate the types of avoidance strategies men and women use to deal with an unwelcome persuasion attempt from an intimate partner, undergraduates wrote essays describing how they avoided such attempts. A 24-strategy coding scheme was developed and used to generate the conceptualization of the avoidance strategies. Undergraduates from a second sample completed a 24-item inventory based on the results of the first study, as well as several measures of personality and intimate relationships. Multidimensional scaling analysis showed that strategies varied along two metadimensions: bilaterality/unilaterality, ranging from compromise and objective discussion to withdrawal and ignoring the partner; and compliance/noncompliance, ranging from compliance and divergent compliance to direct or hostile refusal. These avoidance dimensions were correlated with several measures of personality, gender roles and interpersonal dynamics. While the analyses showed a wide range of significant correlations, masculine instrumentality was the variable that was found to be most consistently related to use of avoidance strategies. The findings indicate that use of avoidance strategies in intimate relationships is associated with personality and role variables as well as features of intimate relations themselves. (WAS)

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Avoidance Strategies in Intimate Relationships

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Running head: Avoidance Strategies

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Avoidance Strategies in Intimate Relationships

ABSTRACT

An investigation was conducted to examine the types of avoidance strategies that heterosexual men and women use to deal with an unwelcome persuasion attempt from their partner. A 24-strategy coding scheme, based on essays written by the subjects, was used by ten expert judges to derive similarity ratings that were subsequently examined with a multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis. The MDS solution indicated that two dimensions underlay the experts' judgments about the avoidance strategies: (a) bilateral/unilateral and (b) compliance/noncompliance. These avoidance dimensions were then correlated with several measures concerned with personality, roles, and intimate relations.

Avoidance Strategies in Intimate Relationships

Social influence refers to the techniques that people use with others in order to satisfy their needs, preferences, and desires. There are two major categories of social influence strategies: power strategies (Falbo, 1977; French & Raven, 1959; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkension, 1980; Rem, 1980, 1981) and avoidance strategies (Falbo & Snell, 1981).

Power Strategies

Power is usually defined as the ability to alter an individual's behavior so that he or she behaves more in accord with another person's own preferences (Kipnis, 1976). French and Raven (1959) were among the first psychologists to differentiate some of the multiple bases of power. They theorized that power strategies may have any of six different bases: (1) reward power, which refers to the ability to obtain behavioral change through the use of rewards such as money, promotion, and affection; (2) coercive power, which refers to the ability to mete out punishments such as fines, demotion, and disapproval in order to change another's behavior; (3) referent power, which refers to the ability to persuade another to change some behavior because she or he likes the powerholder, identifies with the powerholder, and/or wants to be like that person; (4) expert power, which refers to influence over another because one possesses superior skills or

knowledge; (5) legitimate power, which refers to influence exerted because the power holder feels that she or he has the right to influence and the target feels obligated to comply; and (6) informational power, which refers to the ability to alter another's behavior through persuasion and the presentation of information.

In contrast to the deductive conceptualization presented by French and Raven (1959), a recent inductive approach by Falbo (1977) indicates that power strategies can vary along two meta-dimensions: a dimension concerned with rationality (rational versus nonrational strategies) and a dimension related to directness (direct versus indirect strategies). In a more recent study which dealt with power strategy use in intimate relations (Falbo & Peplau, 1980), a two dimensional model was again found, but this time the dimensions seemed to concern directness, ranging from direct to indirect strategies, and interactiveness, ranging from bilateral to unilateral types of strategies.

Avoidance Strategies

In contrast to power strategies, avoidance strategies involve the tactics and techniques that people use when they are not particularly inclined to comply with another person's influence attempt. The results of an initial study conducted by Falbo and Snell (note 1), designed to examine the underlying nature of avoidance strategy use, indicated that

at least two meta-dimensions can characterize the strategies that are used to resist persuasion attempts: (1) a bilaterality dimension, which ranges from the use of such one-sided strategies as a flat refusal, to such two-sided or interactive strategies as reasoning, and (2) an activity dimension, which varies along a continuum ranging from the use of active types of strategies, such as monopolizing a conversation, to passive types of strategies, such as acting disinterested.

The present investigation was planned with the intent to expand upon Falbo and Snell's (note 1) findings. In the original study on avoidance strategy use, the context was concerned with resisting blood donor recruitment. In contrast, the focus of the present investigation is on the strategies that people use when they wish to avoid complying with a persuasion attempt exercised by their partner in an intimate relationship. To accomplish this goal, undergraduates were asked to write an essay on how they respond to unwelcome persuasion attempts from their partners. The strategies lised in these essays were then content analyzed, and subsequently dimensionalized by several professional and in-training psychologists. Multidimensional scaling (Kruskal & Wish, 1978) was employed to analyze the judges' conceptualization of the avoidance strategies, since this procedure provides a geometric representation of the commonality among judges,

while simultaneously incorporating each judge's individual perceptions.

In addition to presenting a conceptualization of avoidance strategies, this study will consider the relevance of several variables related to (1) personality, (2) gender roles, and (3) interpersonal dynamics. The personality variables are concerned with masculine-instrumentality and feminine-epxressiveness, as measured by the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979). The gender role related variables are assessed with two separate inventories, the Male-Female Relations Questionnaire (MFR; Spence, Helmreich, & Sawin, 1982) and the Masculine Role Inventory (MRI; Snell, note 3). The Male-Female Relations Questionnaire contains a subscale concerned with men's and women's tendency to comply with traditional sex role pressures and another subscale that concerns men's and women's tendency to prefer having the male make the decisions in a heterosexual relationship. The second gender role related measure, the Masculine Role Inventory, pertains to the masculine role (O'Neil, 1981a, 1981b). The three subscale on this measure deal with (a) restrictive emotionality, which is related to difficulty in expressing one's own feelings, in being vulnerable and self-disclosing, and in understanding and integrating the complexities of one's emotional life; (b) inhibited affective-affiliative behavior, which refers to limited ways of expressing one's affection and tenderness toward others; and (c) a preoccupation with success,

which refers to a persistent obsession with success and career development. Finally, in order to obtain information about the relationship between avoidance strategies and other dynamic features of intimate relationships, self-disclosure tendencies (Jourard, 1971; Snell, note 2) and liking-loving for one's partner (Rubin, 1970) were assessed.

METHOD

Overview

Undergraduates wrote essays on how they avoid their partner's unwelcome persuasion attempts. A 24-strategy scoring scheme was developed and then used by 10 in-training psychologists to generate the conceptualization of the avoidance strategies reported in the present research. Undergraduates from a second sample then completed a 24-item inventory based on the results of the first study, as well as several measures dealing with personality, roles, and intimate relationships.

Subjects

Two separate samples of subjects participated in the two phases of the present study. Sample I contained 152 subjects (38 males and 114 females) who participated in the study for course credit. Sample II contained 102 subjects (26 males and 76 females) who received course credit for completing the research project. The number of subjects varies in later analyses due to occassional missing data.

Procedure

Survey booklets containing the experimental materials were distributed to the students in both Sample I and II during a regular classroom session, with the instructions to return the booklet and answer sheets at the next regular class session. Additionally, all subjects were told (1) not to discuss the material with anyone until the following week and (2) to complete the sections of the booklet in private and during one complete setting.

Materials

The subjects in Sample II completed the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ; Spence et al., 1979), the Male-Female Relations Questionnaire (MFR; Spence et al., 1982), the Masculine Role Inventory (MRI; Snell, note 3), and several questionnaires related to their intimate relationship: the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Jourard, 1971), the Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale (MFSDS; Snell, note 2), and Rubin's (1970) liking and loving measures. Additionally, the subjects responded to a 24-item avoidance strategy inventory.

EPAQ. The EPAQ (Spence et al., 1979) includes three scales of socially desirable, abstract personality characteristics: psychological masculinity (instrumental traits), psychological femininity (communal traits) and bipolar masculinity-femininity (traits related to emotional vulnerability). In addition, the EPAQ contains several scales composed

of socially undesirable traits. These include the negative masculinity scale, which consists of instrumental, agentic traits that are both stereotypically and in self-report more characteristic of males, and two negative femininity scales, which consist of undesirable traits that are both stereotypically and in self-report more characteristic of females. One of these scales is composed of traits reflecting verbal aggressiveness and the other is composed of traits reflecting a lack of a sense of self, traits associated with a tendency that Bakan (1966) refers to as unmitigated communion. The subjects were asked to respond to the 40-items on the EPAQ on 5-point scales which were scored from 0 to 4. Scores on the six subscales were based on a sum of the items constituting each subscale, such that higher scores indicate greater amounts of the respective attributes.

MFR. The Male-Female Relations Questionnaire is a self-report inventory of sex-role behaviors and preferences (Spence et al., 1982). This 30 item inventory is divided into three scales: the Social Interaction Scale, containing items that describe people's tendency to modify their behavior in social situations that contain implicit sex-role demands; the Marital Roles Scale, which is designed to assess a person's preferred decision-making relationship with his or her spouse (the male makes the decisions versus egalitarianism); and a third scale specific to each sex. For males, the third scale, the

Expressive Concern Scale, is designed to assess men's lack of willingness to express emotional upset overtly and to be thought of as sensitive; and for females the third scale, the Male Preference Scale, is designed to assess women's liking for masculine, dominant men. The subjects responded to the items on this questionnaire by indicating how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the 30 statements. Items were scored from 0 to 4, and then summed to derive total scale scores. For all three subscales of the MFR, higher scores indicate a more "traditional" response pattern.

MRI. The Masculine Role Inventory is a thirty (30) item self-report measure that is designed to assess those aspects of the masculine role associated with (1) success and career preoccupation, (2) restrictive emotionality, and (3) inhibited affective-affiliativeness. Subjects responded to each item on this measure using a 5-point scale with appropriate endpoints (strongly disagree/strongly agree). The items were scored 0 to 4, and total scale scores were obtained by summing the appropriate items. Responses to the MRI are scored so that higher total scores represent more extreme levels of success and career preoccupation, restricted emotionality, and inhibited affective-affiliativeness.

JSDQ. The Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Jourard, 1971, p. 205) is a 40-item measure that assesses self-disclosure willingness to various target persons. In the present study, the subjects indicated their willingness to disclose to their partner/spouse

about both topics that were "high" and "low" in intimacy level. The instructions requested that each subject indicate how willing he/she would be to disclose information about each of 40 topics to their partner/spouse. Their responses ranged from 1 (not at all willing) to 5 (completely willing). These items were summed and averaged in order to compute the dependent measures associated with "low" and "high" levels of topic intimacy.

MFSDS. The Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale (MFSDS; Snell, note 2) is designed to measure people's willingness to disclose information about their masculine-instrumental and their feminine-expressive traits and behaviors. In the present study, the subjects indicated how willing they would be to reveal this personal information to their partner/spouse. Each of the items on this inventory was scored on a 5-point scale with higher scores indicating a greater willingness to disclose the masculine-instrumental and feminine-expressive topics to their partner/spouse. The four separate subscales are concerned with the disclosure of information about one's (1) masculine-instrumental traits, (2) masculine-instrumental behaviors, (3) feminine-expressive traits, and (4) feminine-expressive behaviors.

Rubin Liking-Loving Scales. The Rubin (1970) Liking-Loving Inventory contains two separate scales: the Liking Scale, which focuses on how favorable a person evaluates his/her partner, and the Loving Scale, which is concerned with a person's attachment,

caring, and intimacy with his/her partner (Rubin, 1973, p. 217). The subjects responded to each of the 13 items on the Liking and the Loving scales by indicating their degree of agreement/disagreement (response range 0 - 4). The responses were summed so that higher scores indicate greater liking and loving, respectively.

Avoidance Strategy Questionnaire. A twenty-four item avoidance strategy inventory was constructed based on the results of Sample I (to be described below). For each strategy, the subjects were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how often they used a particular avoidance strategy with their partner (do not use at all/use very often). Responses were coded from 0 to 4, higher scores indicating more frequent use of the particular avoidance strategies.

Avoidance Essay

The subjects in Sample I wrote an essay on a separate sheet of paper prefaced with the following instructions: Write an essay discussing "how you avoid your partner's/spouse's requests in situations where you don't especially want to do what your partner wants you to do."

Coding

Two coders (S.S.B. and H.P.M.) read all the avoidance essays generated by the subjects from Sample I. On the basis of collaborative effort, the two coders decided on 24 categories whose meaning they could agree upon and that represented most of the phenomena furnished in the avoidance essays. To be included in the study, a category

required a minimum of five responses. These 24 strategies, along

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Insert Table 1 about here

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with a brief description, are presented in Table 1.

Multidimensional Scaling

A ten member group of psychologists (including several graduate students in clinical, counseling, personality, and social psychology) provided the data required for the multidimensional scaling analysis (cf. Falbo, 1977). Each judge was given material that described the 24 avoidance-related categories presented in Table 1 and was then instructed how to perform the task which provided the matrix of proximity coefficients for the MDS analysis (cf. Kruskal & Wish, 1978). The instructions required that the experts rate the similarity of each avoidance strategy compared to every other strategy. This meant that the experts made 264 ratings of similarity. The 24 avoidance strategies were presented in a symmetrical matrix. The experts made their ratings of similarity by moving across each column of the matrix, moving from left to right. Each cell of the matrix represented the pairing of one avoidance strategy with another. The judges were instructed that a 0 rating meant that the two strategies were unrelated to each other, a 9 rating meant that the two strategies were almost identical, and that ratings between 0 and 9 represented intermediate amounts of similarity. Therefore, the judges filled in each cell with

a number from 0 to 9. Since the matrix was symmetrical, the judges completed only half of the matrix, the lower triangle.

MDS Data Analysis

The above ten matrices of similarity ratings underwent a nonmetric individual difference model of MDS. Since the judges were expected to vary in both their judgments about the meaning of the avoidance strategies and their use of the 0-9 scale, a weighted Euclidian model in which rescaling was done separately for each judge was used. The measurement level was assumed to be interval. The program used for this analysis is ALSCAL, an individual difference model of MDS (Takane, Young, & deLeeuw, 1977) in the SAS statistical package (Helwig & Council, 1979).

RESULTS

Avoidance Strategy Configuration

Figure 1 represents the judgments about the experts' interpretation of the 24 avoidance strategies. Multidimensional scaling analyses were conducted for a two-dimensional soluation and a three-dimensional solution. Even though the three-dimensional solution accounted for slightly more variance (74%), the two-dimensional solution was selected because it provided the most straightforward representation of the data, while also accounting for a substantial proportion of the variance (64%).

As displayed in Figure 1, the horizontal dimension seems to

represent a bilateral/unilateral dimension. On the right end of this interactive dimension are strategies which involve interpersonal interaction, such as persuasion, offering alternative suggestions,

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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and discussing reasons. At the left end of this dimension are those unilateral strategies which involve one-sided behaviors such as withdrawal, dodging the issue, and ignoring the request. The vertical dimension appears to represent a compliance/non-compliance continnuum. At the top of this dimension are located strategies that reflect acquiesence to the partner's request, such as compliance and divergent compliance. Located near the bottom are those types of strategies that deal with non-compliance, such as hostile refusal, direct refusal, and simple noncompliance.

Overall, the MDS configuration presented in Figure 1 indicates that the judges construed the meaning of the 24 avoidance strategies in terms of two dimensions. The first dimension was concerned with interactive tendencies, with strategies at one end of this dimension involving the partner in a communicative interaction and with strategies at the other end of this dimension involving one-sided, solitary behaviors which isolate one partner from the other. In contrast, the second dimension was concerned with compliance, with strategies at one pole of this dimension involving a yielding to the partner's

persuasion attempt and with strategies at the opposite pole of this dimension involving ways of evading and rebuffing a partner's unwelcomed request.

Correlational Analyses

In order to examine the relationship of the two avoidance strategy dimensions to the personality, role, and intimacy related measures discussed above, the subjects in Sample II were asked to complete 24 statements based on the strategies listed in the avoidance essays. Individual scores on the two avoidance dimensions were derived by using the MDS values listed in Table 1. More specifically, each subject's response to the 24 statements was multiplied by its appropriate MDS coefficient for each of the two dimensions and then these products were summed across the 24 statements. Correlations were then computed between the two avoidance dimensions, the interactive dimension and the compliance dimension, and the EPAQ (Spence et al., 1979), the MFR (Spence et al., 1982), the MRI (Snell, note 3), the JSDQ (Jourard, 1971), the MFSDQ (Snell, note 2), and Rubin's Liking-Loving Measure (Rubin, 1970). The two avoidance measures were scored such that higher scores indicated the use of bilateral (versus unilateral) avoidance strategies and compliance (versus noncompliance) avoidance strategies, respectively. Included in the following analyses were the results for all the subjects combined as well as the results for men and women separately. The latter analyses were justified, given that no sex differences were found

on either avoidance dimension I (M=13.20 for men and M=15.25 for women), F (1,100) <1, $n.s.$, or avoidance dimension II (M= -.11 for men and M= -.82 for women), F (1,100) <1, $n.s.$

EPAQ and Avoidance Strategies

Table 2 presents the correlations between the two avoidance strategy dimensions -- the bilateral versus unilateral and the compliance versus noncompliance dimensions -- and the subscales on the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence et al., 1979) for men and women separately and combined.

Insert Table 2 about here

An inspection of this table indicates that among men those who were high in instrumentality reported using bilateral types of avoidance strategies (r=.34, p < .05),[1] whereas those high in negative femininity (unmitigated communion) reported using unilateral types of avoidance strategies (r=-.38, p < .05). Also, men who were high in negative masculinity reported using noncompliance types of avoidance strategies (r=-.35, p < .05). In contrast, among women those who were high in negative masculinity reported using unilateral types of avoidance strategies (r=-.22, p < .05) and those who were high in positive instrumentality reported the use of noncompliance types of avoidance strategies (r=-.25, p < .05).

MFR and Avoidance Strategy Use

Table 3 presents the correlations between the avoidance strategy dimensions and the subscales on the Male-Female Relations Questionnaire (MFR; Spence et al., 1982) for men and women separately and together.

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 3 shows that among men sex-role behaviors and preferences were unrelated to avoidance strategy use. In contrast, women who reported using unilateral (versus bilateral) types of avoidance strategies tended to modify their behavior in accord with traditional sex-role demands (r=-.31, p< .005) and preferred that husbands have greater power in marital decision making (r= -.21, p <05). A similar pattern of findings was found for women who reported using compliance (versus noncompliance) types of avoidance strategies: those women who behaved in accord with traditional sex-role demands used compliance types of avoidance strategies (r= .24, p <.05) as did those women who preferred a marriage where the husband wields greater decision-making authority (r= .23, p <.05).

The Masculine Role Inventory and Avoidance Strategy Use

The correlations between the Masculine Role Inventory (Snell, note 3) and the two avoidance strategy dimensions were also

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Insert Table 4 about here

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explored. An inspection of Table 4, which presents the relevant correlation coefficients, reveals that among men, those who reported using bilateral (as opposed to unilateral) types of avoidance strategies tended to be less restrictive in the expression of their emotional experiences (r=-.62, p < .005) and to be less inhibited in interpersonal affective-affiliativeness (r=-.40, p < .05). In comparison, among women, the use of bilateral (as opposed to unilateral) types of avoidance strategies was associated with a lack of an obsessive concern with success and accomplishment (r=-.21, p < .05) and also with less of a concern with restricting the expression of their emotional experiences (r=-.35, p < .005). One final finding dealt with the use of compliance versus noncompliance types of avoidance strategies: women who tended to inhibit their affective-affiliativeness reported using noncompliance types of avoidance strategies (r=-.22, p <.05).

Self-Disclosure and Avoidance Strategy Use

Correlation coefficients were also computed between the two

Insert Table 5 about here

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avoidance strategy measures and the two measures of self-disclosure, the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (Jourard, 1971) and the Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Inventory (Snell, note 2). Table 5 presents these correlations.

JSDQ. While there were no relationships for either men or women between the avoidance strategies measures and the "high intimacy" subscale of the JSDQ, among both men and women the use of bilateral (versus unilateral) types of avoidance strategies was associated with a willingness to disclose information that was of "low" intimacy value (for males, r=.69, p < .005, and for females, r=.23, p < .05).

MFSDS. The Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale was also associated with the avoidance strategy dimensions. Women who reported using compliance (versus noncompliance) types of avoidance strategies indicated that they were willing to disclose personal information about their feminine-expressive behaviors to their partners (r=.19, p <.05). In contrast, among men the use of bilateral (versus unilateral) types of avoidance strategies was associated with a willingness to disclose personal information about their masculine-instrumental behaviors (r=.61, p < .005), their feminine-expressive behaviors (r=.50, p <.01), their masculine-instrumental traits (r=.56, p < .005), and their feminine-expressive traits (r=.47, p < .01).

Liking-Loving and the Use of Avoidance Strategies

A final set of correlations was associated with the relationship

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Insert Table 6 about here

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between Rubin's (1970) liking and loving scales and the use of bilateral/unilateral and compliance/noncompliance avoidance strategies.

Table 6 presents the correlations between these two measures, and as an inspection of this table indicates, the only significant correlation among men was the finding that the use of bilateral (versus unilateral) avoidance strategies was associated with more liking for their partner/spouse (r=.37, p < .05). Among women, however, the use of bilateral (versus unilateral) types of avoidance strategies was associated with greater love for their partner/spouse (r=.25, p < .05) and the use of compliance (versus noncompliance) types of avoidance strategies was associated with greater liking for their partner/spouse (r=.21, p < .05).

DISCUSSION

The use of avoidance strategies was examined among heterosexuals in an intimate relationship. A multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis of the participants' discussions of the types of avoidance strategies they use with their romantic partners indicated that the strategies varied along two meta-dimensions, bilaterality and compliance. The bilaterality dimension ranges from such two-sided or interactive strategies as compromise and objective discussion to such one-sided strategies as withdrawal and ignoring the partner. In contrast, the strategies on the second dimension appeared to vary along a compliance (e.g., compliance and divergent compliance) to a noncompliance (e.g., hostile refusal and direct refusal) continuum, and thus the dimension was concerned with the tendency to comply or to yield to a partner's

unwelcomed persuasion attempt (cf. Falbo, 1977, 1982; Falbo & Peplau, 1980).

The two avoidance strategy dimensions, bilateral/unilateral and compliance/noncompliance, were also found to be related to several personality, role, and intimacy related measures. The personality related variable that was found to be most consistently related to the use of avoidance strategies concerned masculine-instrumentality. More specifically, men tended to use bilateral and women tended to use noncompliance related avoidance strategies to the extent that they were highly instrumental and agentic. In contrast, when they were high in undesirable, negative masculine traits (e.g., egotistical), women tended to use unilateral and men tended to use noncompliance related avoidance strategies (cf. Falbo, 1982).

Traditional types of sex-role preferences and behaviors were also related to the use of avoidance strategies with an intimate partner, especially among women (cf. Falbo & Peplau, 1981). Women, for instance, tended to use unilateral (versus bilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance types of avoidance strategies to the extent that they were traditional in their sex-role preferences (i.e., wanting the husband to be the primary decision-maker) and in their sex-role behaviors (i.e, conforming to traditional sex-role pressures in social situations), as measured by the recently developed Male-Female Relations Questionnaire (Spence et al., 1982).

Bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance)

types of avoidance strategies were also associated with another gender-role measure, the Masculine Role Inventory (Snell, note 3), which was designed to assess several aspects of the masculine role (cf. O'Neil, 1981a, 1981b). The results of the present study indicated that both men and women who restricted the expression of their emotional states reported using unilateral types of avoidance strategies to parry their partner's persuasion tactics. Another aspect of the masculine role was also associated with the use of avoidance strategies. Women who were preoccupied with success and accomplishment in their career pursuits reported that they employed unilateral as opposed to bilateral types of avoidance strategies with their partners. A third component of the Masculine Mystique Role Inventory was concerned with the inhibition of affective-affiliative behaviors. Among men, this tendency to foster interpersonal distance between themselves and their partners was associated with the use of unilateral (versus bilateral) types of evasion tactics, while among women this masculine role tendency was associated with the use of noncompliance types of resistence strategies.

In addition to personality and role related phenomena, it was found that avoidance strategy use was associated with several dynamic features of intimate relations per se. Among the men in the present investigation, for example, the use of bilateral avoidance strategies was correlated with a willingness to self-disclose to their partner about the masculine-instrumental and feminine-expressive aspects of

themselves, as well as the superficial and less personal aspects of themselves. However, women's use of bilateral avoidance strategies was associated with a willingness to reveal only superficial personal information to their partners. The only relationship that obtained between the the use of compliance types of avoidance strategies and self-disclosure occurred for women. Compliance with their partner's unwelcome requests tended to covary with a willingness to discuss information about the feminine-expressive aspects of themselves.

Men's and women's affective reactions to their partners were also of concern in the present investigation. Men who liked their partner reported the use of bilateral avoidance strategies, while for women the use of bilateral strategies was related to greater love for their partners. Contrastingly, women who responded to their partner's persuasion efforts by simply complying expressed greater liking for that individual (cf. Falbo, 1982; Falbo & Peplau, 1980).

In summary, the results of this investigation indicate that avoidance strategy use in intimate relationships is associated not only with several personality and role related tendencies among men and women, but also with several features of intimate relations per se. Support for this conclusion comes from the findings that the use of bilateral/unilateral and compliance/noncompliance avoidance strategies was related to the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ; Spence et al., 1979), a personality measure concerned with expressiveness and instrumentality; the Male-Female Relations Questionnaire (MFR;

Spence et al., 1982), a measure of sex-role preferences and behaviors; the Masculine Role Inventory (MRI; Snell, note 3), a measure concerned with the masculine role (O'Neil, 1981a, 1981b); two self-disclosure measures, the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Jourard, 1971) and the Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale (MFSDS; Snell, note 2); and Rubin's (1970) liking and loving questionnaire.

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Footnotes

[1]Unless otherwise indicated, all tests of significance are two-tailed.

Table 1

Definitions and Examples of the Code Used to Classify the 13 Avoidance Strategies found in the Avoidance Essays

STRATEGY LABEL	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
1. Affectionate Noncompliance	Refuses request with an affectionate gesture.	I tell him no, with a kiss.
2. Nonverbal Disapproval	Communicates displeasure through body language.	I express facial disapproval.
3. Divergent Compliance	Requestee complies but unilaterally selects method and time of compliance.	He will have what pleases him in a way that pleases me.
4. Direct Refusal	Refuses the request in a forthright manner.	I simply and bluntly speak out that I don't care to comply with the request.
5. Voices Objections	Tells requester "I don't want to."	I tell him that I don't want to.
6. Explained Noncompliance	Refuses with an explanation.	I would refuse and tell him why I made the particular decision.
7. Alleged Excuses	Makes excuses for non-compliance.	I make excuses about being busy.
8. Compliance	Complies with request.	I will usually do it anyway.
9. Objective Discussion	Discusses the request with requester.	We discuss the matter.
10. Subjective Discussion	Discusses feelings with requester.	I express my feelings honestly.
11. Inability to Comply	Makes excuses for non-compliance with an emphasis on inability to comply.	I make excuses about why I can't (not won't) comply.
12. Offer Alternatives	Offers alternatives to the original request.	I suggest another option.

Table 1 (cont.)

13.	Veiled Threat	Tells requester to do it alone or with someone else.	Tell him to go ahead, if he wants to do it, do it.
14.	Compromise	Suggests a compromise.	We try to compromise on a "middle ground."
15.	Persistent Refusal	Is persistent, not giving in.	I will not give in to his wishes.
16.	Simple Noncompliance	Does not comply.	I simply won't do it.
17.	Hostile Refusal	Directly and angrily refuses to comply.	I just say "Hell no!"
18.	Withdrawal	Withdraws emotionally from requester.	I tend to get flustered and withdraw from the person.
19.	Ignoring	Ignores requester or request.	I ignore him. I would try to ignore the request.
20.	Procrastination	Procrastinates until it is too late to comply.	I procrastinate and therefore don't get around to doing it.
21.	Avoidance	Avoids partner or request.	I try to avoid the subject in her presence. I won't answer the phone.
22.	Dodging	Changes the subject.	I divert attention to some other issue.
23.	Persuasion	Persuades requester to "see things my way."	I try to convince him of the reasonableness of doing things my way.
24.	Discuss Reasons	Discusses reasons for noncompliance.	I usually discuss my reasons for avoiding his request.

Table 2

Correlations between the Avoidance Strategy Measures and the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire for Males and Females separately and for the Total Sample

Avoidance Strategy Dimensions	EPAQ Subscales					
	+M	+F	M-F	-M	-Fva	-Fc
Bilateral versus Unilateral Avoidance Strategies						
MALES [a]	.34*	.14	.14	-.13	-.28	-.38*
FEMALES [b]	.07	.15	.16	-.22*	-.19	-.09
TOTAL [c]	.08	.17*	.10	-.22*	-.17*	-.13
Compliance versus Noncompliance Avoidance Strategies						
MALES [a]	.05	.24	-.12	-.35*	-.20	.26
FEMALES [b]	-.25*	-.03	-.09	.09	.12	.05
TOTAL [c]	-.19*	.01	-.06	.03	.06	.07

Note. EPAQ=Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire; +M=Positive Masculine-Instrumentality; +F=Positive Feminine-Expressiveness: M-F= Bipolar Masculinity-Femininity (i.e., low emotional vulnerability); -M=Negative Masculine-Instrumentality; -Fva=Negative Femininity (i.e., verbal-aggressiveness); -Fc=Negative Femininity (i.e., selflessness). Higher scores on the EPAQ subscales indicate greater degrees of the relevant psychological attribute. Higher scores on the avoidance measures indicate greater use of bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance) types of avoidance strategies.

**p < .01 *p < .05 [a]N=25-26. [b]N=71-73. [c]N=96-99.

Table 3

Correlations between the two Avoidance Strategy Dimensions and the Male-Female Relations Questionnaire for Males and Females

Male-Female Relations Questionnaire	Avoidance Strategies	
	Bilateral versus Unilateral	Compliance versus Noncompliance
Marital Roles Scale		
MALES[a]	- .23	.31
FEMALES[b]	- .21*	.23*
TOTAL[c]	- .22*	.24**
Social Interaction Scale		
MALES[a]	- .01	-.10
FEMALES[b]	- .31***	.24*
TOTAL[c]	- .26***	.19
Expressive Concern Scale		
MALES[a]	- .13	.19
Preference for Masculine, Dominant Males		
FEMALES[b]	- .16	-.07

Note. Higher strategy scores indicate greater use of bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance) types of avoidance strategies. Higher scores on the subscales of the MFR indicate more "traditional" types of responses.

***p < .005 **p < .01 *p < .05 [a]N=25. [b]N=73. [c]N=99.

Table 4

Correlations between the Two Avoidance Dimensions and the Masculine Role Measures for Men and Women

Masculine Role Measures	Avoidance Strategies	
	Bilateral versus Unilateral	Compliance versus Noncompliance
Restrictive Emotionality		
MALES[a]	-.62***	.04
FEMALES[b]	-.35***	.19
TOTAL[c]	-.41***	.17*
Obcessive Sucess		
MALES[a]	-.08	-.09
FEMALES[b]	-.21*	.02
TOTAL[c]	-.18*	.02
Inhibited Affective-Affiliativeness		
MALES[a]	-.40*	-.26
FEMALES[b]	-.17	-.22*
TOTAL[c]	-.22*	-.21*

Note. Higher avoidance strategy scores indicate greater use of bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance) types of strategies. Higher scores on the MRI indicate more "masculine" types of role behaviors.

***p < .005
**p < .01
*p < .05

[a]N=26. [b]N=74-75. [c]N=101-102.

Table 5

Correlations between the Two Avoidance Strategy Dimensions and Self-Disclosure as Measured by the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire and the Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale

Avoidance Strategy Dimensions	JSDQ		MFSDS			
	High Intimacy	Low Intimacy	Masculine Behaviors	Feminine Behaviors	Masculine Traits	Feminine Traits
Bilateral versus Unilateral Avoidance Strategies						
MALES[a]	.22	.69***	.61***	.50**	.56***	.47**
FEMALES[b]	.01	.23*	-.06	-.06	-.04	-.05
TOTAL[c]	.05	.36***	.09	.08	.10	.06
Compliance versus Noncompliance Avoidance Strategies						
MALES[a]	-.21	-.08	-.19	-.21	-.13	-.18
FEMALES[b]	.04	-.06	.19	.19*	.02	.15
TOTAL[c]	-.04	-.06	.14	.13	-.01	.09

Note. Higher avoidance strategy scores indicate greater use of bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance) types of strategies. Higher scores on the disclosure measures indicate a greater willingness to disclose personal information about that topic. JSDQ=Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire; MFSDS=Masculine and Feminine Self-Disclosure Scale.

***p < .005
**p < .01
*p < .05

[a]N=25-26. [b]N=73-75. [c]N=99-102.

Table 6

Correlations between the Two Avoidance Dimensions and Rubin's (1970) Liking-Loving Measures for Men and Women

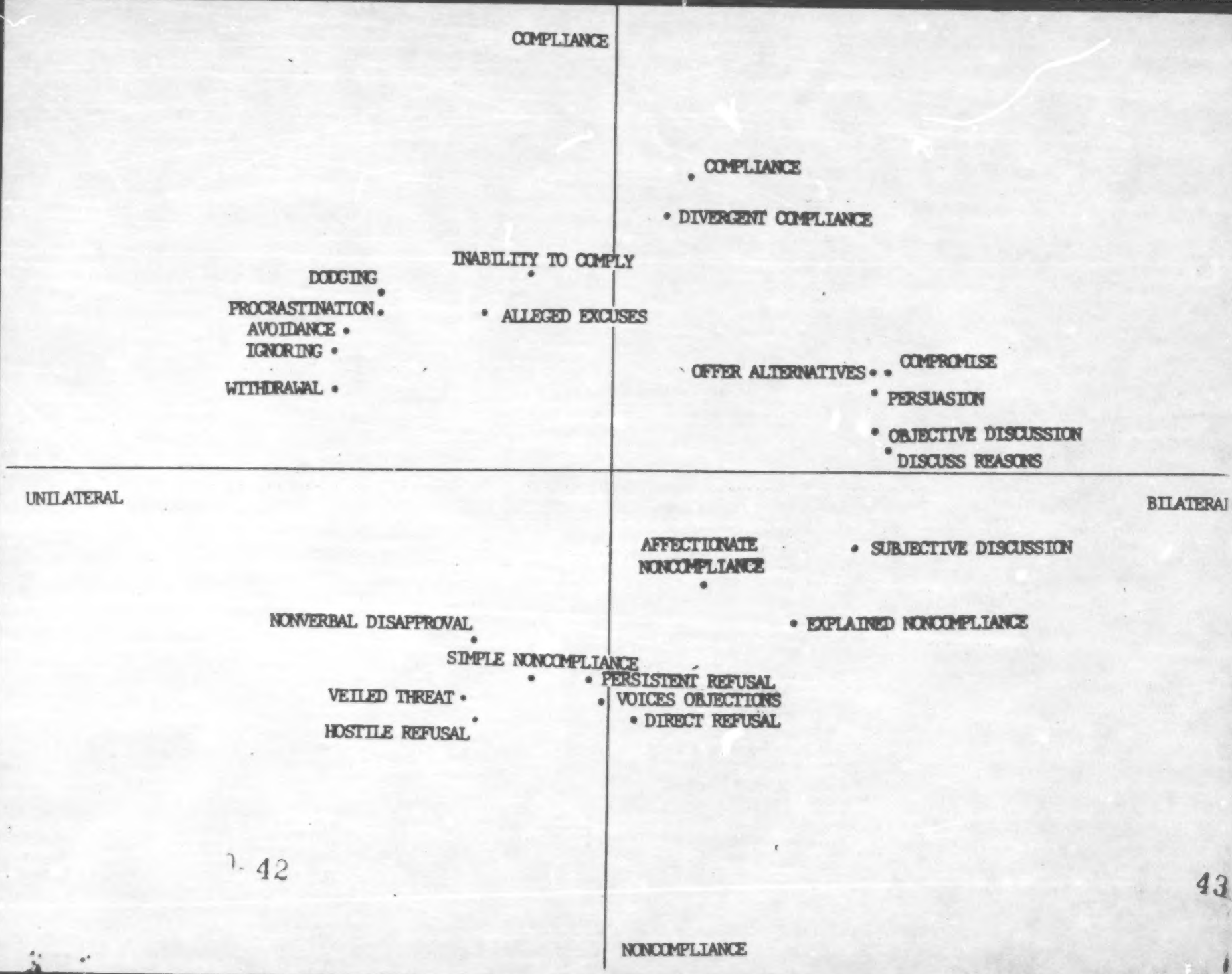
Avoidance Strategy Dimensions		LIKING	LOVE
Bilateral versus Unilateral Avoidance Strategies			
	MALES[a]	.37*	.19
	FEMALES[b]	.17	.25*
	TOTAL[c]	.22*	.24**
Compliance versus Noncompliance Avoidance Strategies			
	MALES[a]	.24	.15
	FEMALES[b]	.21*	.19
	TOTAL[c]	.23**	.19*

Note. Higher avoidance strategy scores indicate greater use of bilateral (versus unilateral) and compliance (versus noncompliance) types of strategies. Higher scores on the Liking-Loving measures indicate more liking and more love for the subject's partner/spouse.

***p < .005
**p < .01
*p < .05

a N=26. b N=74. c N=101.

Figure 1. Configuration of avoidance strategies.


COMPLIANCE
COMPLIANCE
DIVERGENT COMPLIANCE
INABILITY TO COMPLY
DODGING
PROCRASTINATION
AVOIDANCE
IGNORING
WITHDRAWAL
ALLEGED EXCUSES
OFFER ALTERNATIVES
COMPROMISE
PERSUASION
OBJECTIVE DISCUSSION
DISCUSS REASONS
UNILATERAL
BILATERAL
AFFECTIONATE NONCOMPLIANCE
SUBJECTIVE DISCUSSION
NONVERBAL DISAPPROVAL
EXPLAINED NONCOMPLIANCE
SIMPLE NONCOMPLIANCE
PERSISTENT REFUSAL
VEILED THREAT
VOICES OBJECTIONS
HOSTILE REFUSAL
DIRECT REFUSAL
NONCOMPLIANCE